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HD **Finally, a meaningful definition of 'pro-life'; Even the Vatican now believes that respecting human life requires climate action and migrants' rights**

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Women who choose to have abortions don't need to justify themselves, but imagining some of their reasons isn't hard. To start: Thirty-five per cent of the world's 3.8 billion women have experienced sexual violence , and terminating a pregnancy after rape is a decision that's easy to understand.

Sixty per cent of women who get abortions in the United States are already mothers – they know what it takes to raise a child, including money. A 2017 study found that socioeconomic stress was the primary reason women in 14 different countries cited for seeking abortion. More than 600 million people in the world live in extreme poverty, so do the math.

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Such stark truths are why "pro-life" is a misleading name for any movement focused solely on limiting abortion access. If the concern is only what happens inside wombs, being anti-abortion also means being anti-women's ability to raise healthy children and to lead their own lives with dignity.

Recently, though, there are indications that some who call themselves "pro-life" are expanding the term's definition, with climate change and migrants' rights as common flashpoints. It's a promising development, one full of possibilities for building bridges on which to travel toward common goals.

Let's start with climate: Broadly, those who are most likely to oppose abortion access are also most likely to consider themselves conservative. And, as an Angus Reid poll proved again last week, conservatives are most likely to deny that climate change is a problem – 21 per cent of

Conservative Party of Canada voters believe it's an unproven theory, compared with 9 per cent of Canadians over all.

There is, though, a generational divide: In both Canada and the United States, young people are more likely to believe climate science. Young conservatives might be more skeptical than their liberal counterparts, but they're less skeptical than their parents and grandparents.

And so, as they try to shake their elders out of their fossilized position on fuel, some are invoking the pro-life cause. That includes Chelsey Yeaton, a student at a Christian college in Illinois and a fellow with Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, which lobbies senior religious leaders and politicians to take urgent action.

"If we say we're pro-life, we have to care for people who are experiencing incredible environmental degradation …," Ms. Yeaton said https://insideclimatenews.org/news/21112018/evangelicals-climate-change-action-creation-care-wheaton-college-millennials-yeca?amp&__twitter_impression=true in a recent interview with InsideClimate News. "If we're pro-life, that's a bigger issue to me than abortion."

Another evangelical woman, Tess Clark, recently told The New York Times' podcast The Daily that the pro-life movement should oppose hard-line treatment of border crossers. She grew up in Texas, where all of the adults in her life said that the issues of abortion and immigration made voting Republican her "Christian duty."

Ms. Clark became a teacher, and grew to care about her students with undocumented parents. She married another evangelical, one who had Muslim friends and volunteered with refugees. "He loved people that I was afraid to love," Ms. Clark said of her husband.

As her interpretation of her faith changed, Ms. Clark became so sickened by Donald Trump that she chose not to vote in 2016. In a fascinating conversation with her father shared on the podcast, she said the crackdown on Latin American migrants was her final breaking point.

Although he disagrees with her Democratic midterms vote, Ms. Clark's father chokes up as she recounts the story of a woman she met whose children were in the United States without her. The mother's reason for crossing the border was a suicide attempt by her nine-year-old child.

Explaining her new outlook, Ms. Clark equated Syrian refugees and separated Honduran families with "a baby in its mother's womb." "I feel that being pro-life is being pro all life," she said.

No less an authority than the Catholic Church concurs. Pope Francis is a significant advocate of climate action, and has openly criticized the U.S. treatment of migrants. Last April, a Vatican ethics conference considered what one bishop explained as a "360-degree approach to life."

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What a refreshing idea. Let's all agree that respecting human life means ensuring secure housing, good schooling, decent jobs, freedom from violence and a stable environment, especially for women and children.

Happily, these are things that have already been proven to reduce unwanted pregnancies. Chances are, they could even make having a baby a welcome idea, instead of a scary one.

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